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U.S. AGENCY FOR INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT

20 April 2001

Subject: Draft Request for Application No. 160-01-27  
Support for Croatia's NonGovernmental Organizations (CRO-NGO)

The United States Government, represented by the Agency for International Development Regional Contracting Office in Budapest, Hungary, is seeking comments and questions to the subject Draft Request for Application (RFA).

Comments/Questions are requested within 10 days after posting of this Draft RFA and should be submitted to Mr. Ashraf Soos via facsimile (36-1) 475-4568 or (36-1) 302-0693, or e-mail (asoos@usaid.gov). We anticipate issuing a Formal RFA sometime shortly after receipt and consideration of comments/questions. In this regard, please inform the undersigned by e-mail if you have downloaded this Draft RFA. Subject line should read "Notice of Interest", and body should address physical address, as well as e-mail return address. This will allow USAID to notify you should a Formal RFA be issued.

Issuance of this Draft RFA does not constitute a commitment on the part of the Government to issue a Formal RFA, nor does it commit the Government to pay any costs associated with such.

Should you have any questions/comments concerning this process, please direct them to Mr. Soos or the undersigned at e-mail aholland@usaid.gov or phone (36-1) 475-4568.

We welcome any questions and/or comments.

Sincerely,

Andrew Holland  
Regional Agreement Officer  
USAID/RCO Budapest

# **SUPPORT FOR CROATIA'S NONGOVERNMENTAL ORGANIZATIONS (CRO-NGO)**

## ***EXECUTIVE SUMMARY***

The United States Agency for International Development (USAID) seeks applications from qualified U.S. nongovernmental or international private voluntary organizations (NGOs or PVOs) to implement the "Support for Croatia's NGOs" Program (Cro-NGO). The purpose of this activity is twofold:

- *TO ENHANCE THE SUSTAINABILITY OF CROATIA'S NGO SECTOR BY: PROVIDING TRAINING, TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE, AND "SUSTAINABILITY GRANTS" TO NGOS WHOSE LEADERSHIP IS CONSIDERED IMPORTANT TO THE LONG-TERM FUTURE OF CROATIA'S NGO SECTOR; BY PROMOTING PHILANTHROPY, VOLUNTEERISM, AND INCREASING OTHER LOCAL SOURCES OF SUPPORT FOR NGOS; AND BY IMPROVING THE IMAGE OF THE NONGOVERNMENTAL SECTOR IN CROATIA; AND*
- To promote community-based civil society initiatives through an integrated program of small grants and training.

"Cro-NGO" is a three-year activity with two optional one-year extensions. The activity is expected to commence in September 2001. USAID expects to provide up to \$6 million for the initial three years of this program, which should conclude in August 2004, subject to the availability of funds. "Cro-NGO" will contribute to the achievement of USAID/Croatia's Strategic Objective 2.1, "More Effective Citizen Participation and Improved Governance." This activity will build on the achievements of the current USAID-funded "NGO Development Program." While the Mission is satisfied with the work of the current implementing partner (the Academy for Educational Development), we hope to see unique approaches and the widest participation in this application.

The activity will consist of two main components. Under the first component, the activity will improve the prospects for NGO sector sustainability in Croatia by strengthening key nongovernmental organizations, increase sources of financial and volunteer support for NGOs, and improve the public image of Croatia's NGO sector. Under the second component, the activity will work at the local level, to strengthen grassroots NGOs and local citizens' organizations<sup>1</sup> and to promote citizens' involvement in improving their communities through a program of small grants supplemented with targeted training.

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<sup>1</sup> For the purposes of this RFA, a "grassroots NGO" is defined as a registered local Croatian non-commercial, non-governmental organization (or a local branch of a national Croatian organization) that directly serves a local constituency. A "local citizens' organization" is defined as a locally-based initiative group that may or may not be registered as an NGO. These organizations may include quasi-governmental bodies such as local councils (mjesni odbori).

Assistance under the “Cro-NGO” program targets two very different groups under these two components: “anchor” organizations that provide national or sectoral leadership and serve national constituencies, and “grassroots” organizations whose focus is on their individual communities. These groups also have very different technical assistance needs. **For these reasons, USAID will consider making separate awards for Components One and Two. USAID welcomes applications that address either one or both components described in this Statement of Work. Applicants who propose a program that addresses only one component MUST describe in detail the approach and procedures they will follow to assure effective coordination with assistance provided under the other component.**

At this time, USAID does not anticipate providing significant support for NGO sector capacity building efforts beyond the completion of this activity. Therefore, Applicants should propose a program that will have a maximum and sustainable impact on building the sector’s capacity. As one means to ensure that the NGO sector has the necessary organizational and technical capacity to sustain its future development by the end of this program, Applicants are asked to propose ways to make the training and knowledge in advanced topics gained by subgrantees available to other NGOs. In particular, where not already available, relevant training materials in Croatian should be published or otherwise made accessible for Croatian NGOs.

While USAID anticipates the NGO sector to have the necessary organizational and technical capacity to sustain its future development by the end of this program, it recognizes that there may be an on-going need for financial support of the NGO sector. This is likely to be particularly true of NGO support organizations that may have more difficulty generating local revenues, as well as grassroots CSOs. Given this situation, funds permitting, USAID may consider additional targeted financial support of the sector beyond this program. USAID will also coordinate closely with other donors to ensure synergy and leverage of their resources, both during and after the term of this program.

Cro-NGO should also contribute to the development of Croatian grantmaking capacity. Therefore, Applicants should propose an approach that draws on Croatian organizations, consultants, and experts wherever possible in grantmaking, grants management, and in the provision supplemental training and technical assistance to ensure the submission of quality proposals and the successful completion of projects.

Applicants should propose competitive, transparent, and representative grant selection procedures for both the anchor and small grants programs. **So as to avoid all conflicts of interest (real or perceived), the Recipient and its implementing partners (Croatian or foreign) will not be eligible to receive subgrants under this Agreement.**

“Support for Croatia’s NGOs” is one among several assistance programs that provide grants to Croatian NGOs. Given the availability of diverse funding sources, both USG-funded and those of other domestic and international donors, Applicants are requested to carefully consider the role of grants under this program and to establish a plan to

coordinate with other grant programs. In addition, effective implementation of the program will require cooperation and coordination with programs supported by USAID and other donors working in related areas. An illustrative list of related USAID-supported programs appears in section IX.

*Sufficient funds are not available in this agreement to conduct large-scale public relations or media campaigns to improve the image of the NGO sector in Croatia.* Applicants should therefore propose creative, cost-effective ways to publicize the achievements of subgrant recipients (both of anchor institutions and small grants), maximizing use of the Internet and other electronic media wherever possible.

## I . INTRODUCTION

The United States Agency for International Development (USAID) seeks applications from qualified U.S. nongovernmental or international private voluntary organizations (NGOs or PVOs) to implement the “Support for Croatia’s NGOs” Program (Cro-NGO). “Support for Croatian NGOs” will contribute to the achievement of USAID/Croatia’s Strategic Objective 2.1, “More Effective Citizen Participation and Improved Governance.” Work under this program component will build on the achievements of the current USAID-funded “NGO Development Program.” While the Mission is satisfied with the work of the current implementing partner (the Academy for Educational Development), we hope to see unique approaches and the widest participation in this application.

The activity will consist of two main components. Under the first component, the activity will continue international and domestic efforts to improve the prospects for NGO sector sustainability in Croatia by strengthening key organizations, increasing sources of financial and volunteer support for NGOs, and improving their public image. Under the second component, the activity will work at the local level, to strengthen local citizens’ organizations and to promote citizen involvement in improving their communities through a program of small grants supplemented with targeted training.

Component One: The organization selected to implement “Cro-NGO” (hereafter “the Recipient”) will provide advanced-level training and technical assistance to promote the sustainability of intermediate support organizations and other key NGOs that are already active in the sector, have already been strengthened by external capacity-building support, and whose leadership is important to the continued development of Croatia’s NGO sector. These ten to fifteen organizations are expected to serve as “anchors” for the sector by ensuring that essential leadership and technical capacity continues to be available to Croatian NGOs as foreign donor funding decreases. As a complement to training and technical assistance, the Recipient will provide “sustainability grants” to these anchor organizations for ongoing operating expenses, targeted organizational development initiatives, and/or project-based expenses.

Component Two: The Recipient will design and implement a program of small grants supplemented with targeted training to strengthen local citizens’ organizations and to promote citizen involvement in improving their communities. As a result of assistance

provided under this component, local NGOs will engage citizens in playing a greater role in civic activism and in improving their communities, an important step in Croatia's transition to full democracy and a market economy. Component Two assistance will provide critical financial support to Croatia's nascent grassroots NGO sector and build public support for NGOs, as communities see the direct benefits that they can provide. Through these efforts, local NGOs will increase their capacity to provide valuable services to their communities in the future.

Assistance under the "Cro-NGO" program targets two very different groups within Croatia's NGO sector: "anchor" organizations that provide national or sectoral leadership and serve national constituencies, and "grassroots" organizations whose focus is on their individual communities. These groups also have very different technical assistance needs. **For these reasons, USAID will consider making separate awards for Components One and Two. USAID welcomes applications that address either one or both components described in this Statement of Work. Applicants who propose a program that addresses only one component MUST describe in detail the approach and procedures they will follow to assure effective coordination with assistance provided under the other component.**

Use of Croatian consultants and experts to provide technical assistance under this agreement is strongly encouraged; the use of foreign technical expertise should be kept to a minimum. In those cases when it is necessary to engage foreign technical expertise, preference should be given to experts from Central and Eastern Europe or the NIS.

At this time, USAID does not anticipate providing significant support for NGO sector capacity building efforts beyond the completion of this activity. Therefore, Applicants should propose a program that will have a maximum and sustainable impact on building the sector's capacity. While USAID anticipates the NGO sector to have the necessary organizational and technical capacity to sustain its future development by the end of this program, it recognizes that there may be an on-going need for financial support of the NGO sector. This is likely to be particularly true of NGO support organizations that may have more difficulty generating local revenues, as well as grassroots CSOs. Given this situation, funds permitting, USAID may consider additional targeted financial support of the sector beyond this program. USAID will also coordinate closely with other donors to ensure synergy and leverage of their resources, both during and after the term of this program.

## ***II. BACKGROUND***

USAID's assistance to civil society organizations supports USAID/Croatia's Strategic Objective 2.1, More Effective Citizen Participation and Improved Governance. This objective contributes directly to the Mission's overall goal of helping Croatia achieve a democratic society and productive market economy that will serve as a cornerstone for prosperity and stability in the region.

USAID has provided extensive support to Croatian NGOs in the form of grants, technical assistance and training since 1993. Until 1998, the focus of this assistance was on NGOs working on war recovery efforts and advocacy NGOs. With USAID funding, major humanitarian and civil society programs have been implemented by: the International Rescue Committee (IRC); America's Development Foundation (ADF); the STAR Network, first affiliated with Delphi International and then with World Learning; and World Learning's international training program, TRANSIT. With the exception of TRANSIT, each of these programs combined grant support with training and technical assistance in order to build the organizational capacity of partner NGOs.

USAID has supported NGO efforts in war-affected areas since 1994. As noted above, major assistance programs included an umbrella grant to the International Rescue Committee (IRC) from 1994 to 1998 and an agreement with America's Development Foundation (ADF) from 1994 to 2000 to support a network of NGOs providing legal services to refugees and displaced persons. Through these large agreements, and through the Office of Transition Initiatives, USAID has provided support to numerous NGOs in all of Croatia's Areas of Special State Concern.

USAID also provided significant financial support to the Croatian NGO sector through the Office of Transition Initiatives, which operated in Croatia from 1997 to 2000. During this time, OTI provided over 200 grants to NGOs to implement projects that increased access to information, promoted public participation in decision-making, improved the transparency and accountability of government and public institutions, contributed to the return and reintegration of displaced persons and refugees, and fostered post-conflict resolution.

After 1998, USAID also began providing assistance to develop the enabling environment for the NGO sector as a whole through regional cooperative agreements with the International Center for Nonprofit Law (ICNL) and Freedom House, as well as a three year, \$2.7 million contract with the Academy for Educational Development (AED).

Through AED, USAID's NGO Development Program has concentrated on building and improving an enabling environment to support the future development of the NGO sector as a whole. To do this, AED has provided intensive training-of-trainers (TOT) to Croatians who have since established three organizations that provide training and technical assistance to other NGOs. AED grants have also supported the creation of NGO resource centers in the cities of Rijeka, Osijek and Split. Other AED grants supported advocacy projects by established NGOs working in the fields of human rights/democratization, environmental protection, business/economic development, women's issues and social welfare/reconciliation. A recent NGO Development Program quarterly report appears at Attachment 3.

The U.S. Government is one among many international institutions – multilateral and bilateral, public and private – that have provided significant financial support to NGOs in Croatia over the past decade. Much of this support has been targeted to the needs of war-affected areas, and therefore has primarily benefited NGOs working with refugees,

internally displaced persons and minorities in the fields of humanitarian assistance, human rights, psycho-social services, and legal assistance. Another focus of U.S. Government and foreign donor assistance has been on developing the advocacy capacity of Croatian NGOs, especially in the areas of human rights, civic participation, and environmental activism. To date, relatively little support has gone to community-based organizations implementing service delivery or community development projects outside the war-affected areas. More detailed information on U.S. and other international donor programs and funding priorities is included in Attachment 1.

### *CSOs in Croatia Today*

Civil society development has been shaped by the same factors that have formed modern Croatia: the legacy of forty-six years of Communist Party of Yugoslavia control; four years of armed hostilities immediately following independence in 1991; and the autocratic and highly nationalistic policies of the Croatian Democratic Party (HDZ) Government from 1991 until early in 2000.

Many NGOs active in Croatia today were formed in response to the devastation of the war. From 1993 through 1995, foreign donor resources for war recovery efforts were tremendous. Fledgling Croatian organizations helped deploy tens of millions of dollars in donor resources to meet the staggering human needs of internally displaced persons and refugees from Bosnia and Herzegovina (and later of returning Croats who had been refugees in Bosnia and Serbia), to conduct human rights and peace-building activities, and to rebuild the physical infrastructure of the country. Their efforts have resulted in significant improvements in the lives of many who were most directly affected by the war.

Despite impressive achievements and progress, NGOs in Croatia today remain relatively few in number, and most are organizationally weak and financially vulnerable.<sup>2</sup> Their public image has suffered due to operating until recently in a restrictive environment that limited their potential scope of activities and prevented them from building a base of financial and popular support within Croatian society. This isolation exacerbated an already-heavy dependence on foreign donor funding that was a natural consequence of the sector's having served as a conduit for enormous levels of humanitarian assistance during and immediately after the war. Please see Attachments 1 and 2 for a fuller discussion of the conditions that have shaped Croatia's NGO sector and the constraints it now faces.

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<sup>2</sup> Of 20,000 NGOs registered in Croatia today, only 1,000 are developed to the point of having an operating budget, their own premises, some office equipment, and a few regular staff members. Most of these NGOs work in fields that have received significant donor support, including human rights, women's rights, psycho-social assistance, peace-building, and the environment. Groups in other sectors, including those working in social service delivery and culture, or at the community level (rather than fulfilling a national mission), have received less attention and assistance, and, as a result remain relatively less developed. Groups working at the community level in particular are weak.



In contrast to the previous government, which held all but a few NGOs suspect and often labeled citizens' initiatives "anti-Croatian," the new government has expressed support for NGOs, emphasizing their role in bringing positive changes and democracy to Croatia. To date, this rhetorical support has been slow to manifest itself in the concrete changes that are vital to the survival of the NGO sector, such as improvements in the legal framework within which NGOs operate (although such improvements are currently pending in the Croatian Parliament). Lack of these concrete changes, coupled with shrinking levels of foreign and domestic funding, have diminished many NGO activists' initiative and enthusiasm. Nevertheless, local NGOs now operate free of government harassment and enjoy unprecedented opportunities to carry out their missions at both the national and the local level.

In light of these challenges, USAID seeks to provide cost-effective assistance that will build enough institutional and human capacity in the Croatian NGO sector to nurture the sector's growth and development after USAID funding ceases. USAID also seeks to address the need for strengthening grassroots civil society organizations (CSOs), which are currently at a nascent stage of development in Croatia, and stimulate citizen involvement in community-based initiatives to local needs. Achieving these objectives will require close coordination with other USG-funded programs and with the programs of other international donors, as well as reliance on and close collaboration with Croatian institutions and experts.

### ***III. PROGRAM APPROACHES***

Assistance under the "Support to Croatia's NGOs" program will be delivered in two components. Assistance under component one will enhance the sustainability of the NGO sector in Croatia by strengthening the capacity of intermediate support organizations (ISOs) and other key NGOs, promoting local support of NGOs, and improving the image of the sector. Component one will have three subcomponents. Subcomponent One activities will bolster the sustainability of a core group of NGOs in Croatia, whose futures are considered vital to the continued development of the sector as a whole. The organizational capacity of these "anchor" organizations will be built through targeted, advanced level training and technical assistance, as well as multi-year grants that cover organizational expenses, organizational development activities, or project-based expenses. Supplementary assistance under the second and third subcomponents will increase the sustainability of the sector as a whole, through activities that improve the enabling environment for philanthropy and volunteerism, increase local funding of NGOs, and improve the public image of the sector.

Component two assistance will strengthen local civil society organizations (CSOs) and promote citizens' involvement in improving their communities, an important step in Croatia's transition to full democracy. Through a program of small grants to grassroots CSOs, Cro-NGO will provide critical financial support to nascent grassroots CSOs and build public support for NGOs, as communities see the direct benefits that NGOs can provide. Finally, through developing and implementing successful community projects, as well as through participating in supplemental training and information-sharing

opportunities, grassroots CSOs will increase their capacity to provide valuable services to their communities.

In responding to this RFA, Applicants should bear in mind the following considerations, which are common to both program components:

*Developing Croatian Institutional and Human Capacity:* Applicants should keep the use of foreign technical assistance to a minimum. In proposing the provision of training and technical assistance under this program, Applicants should suggest mechanisms that maximize the use of local trainers and consultants, and that promote the development of a Croatian market for training whenever possible. However, while significant local training capacity now exists, there may still be a need to engage external trainers and consultants to deliver some of the advanced level assistance required under this program. When this is necessary, applicants are strongly encouraged to utilize expertise within Central and Eastern Europe, whenever possible, rather than relying solely on experts from the United States and Western Europe, and to propose activities that increase the capacity of Croatian trainers to deliver such assistance in the future.

Cro-NGO should also contribute to the development of Croatian grantmaking capacity. Therefore, Applicants should propose an approach that draws on Croatian organizations, consultants, and experts wherever possible in grantmaking, grants management, and in the provision supplemental training and technical assistance to ensure the submission of quality proposals and the successful completion of projects.

*Promoting Transparency in Grantmaking and Program Implementation:* Applicants should propose competitive, transparent, and representative grant selection procedures for both the “sustainability grants” and small grants programs. Both solicitations and results of competitions should be widely publicized. During subgrant implementation the Recipient will require that subgrantees maintain strict accountability and conform to regular reporting procedures. **So as to avoid all conflicts of interest (real or perceived), the Recipient and its implementing partners (Croatian or foreign) will not be eligible to receive subgrants under this Agreement.**

*Coordination With Other Assistance Programs:* “Support for Croatia’s NGOs” is one among several assistance programs that provide grants to Croatian NGOs. Given the availability of diverse funding sources, both USG-funded and those of other domestic and international donors, Applicants are requested to carefully consider the role of grants under this program and to establish a plan to coordinate with other grant programs. In addition, effective implementation of the program will require cooperation and coordination with programs supported by USAID and other donors working in related areas. An illustrative list of related USAID-supported programs appears in section IX.

*Disseminating Program Products, Results, and Best Practices:* USAID does not anticipate providing significant support for NGO sector capacity-building efforts beyond the completion of this activity. Therefore, Applicants should design a program that will have a maximum and sustainable impact on building the sector’s capacity. As one means

to ensure that the NGO sector has the necessary organizational and technical capacity to sustain its future development by the end of this program, Applicants are asked to propose ways to make the training and knowledge in advanced topics gained by subgrantees available to other NGOs. In particular, where not already available, relevant training materials in Croatian should be published or otherwise made accessible for Croatian NGOs.

*Sufficient funds are not available in this agreement to conduct large-scale public relations or media campaigns to improve the image of the NGO sector in Croatia. Applicants should therefore propose creative, cost-effective ways to publicize the achievements of subgrant recipients (both of anchor institutions and small grants), maximizing use of the Internet and other electronic media wherever possible.*

*Applicants should note that USAID does not anticipate funding the following types of activities under this program:*

- Efforts to improve the legislative framework for NGOs (this assistance is already being provided by the International Center for Not-for-Profit Law)
- U.S.-Croatia partnerships or other international exchanges for the purpose of transferring technical expertise, especially in social service delivery
- Grants to promote coalition formation (as a primary goal)
- Academic research
- Small grants whose sole purpose is the provision of humanitarian assistance or social services (rather than building or increasing capacity to provide services)

#### IV. PROGRAM ACTIVITIES AND IMPLEMENTATION

Here is a list of specific program activities to be undertake under the “Support for Croatia’s NGOs” (Cro-NGO) program, together with suggestions on implementation.

##### 1. ENHANCING THE SUSTAINABILITY OF CROATIA’S NGO SECTOR

***THIS COMPONENT OF THE CRO-NGO PROGRAM WILL ENHANCE THE LONG-TERM SUSTAINABILITY OF THE NGO SECTOR IN CROATIA BY STRENGTHENING THE CAPACITY OF INTERMEDIATE SUPPORT ORGANIZATIONS AND OTHER KEY NGOS THAT SERVE AS “ANCHORS” FOR THE SECTOR; INCREASING LOCAL SOURCES OF SUPPORT FOR NGOS, INCLUDING VOLUNTEER SUPPORT; AND IMPROVING THE PUBLIC IMAGE OF NGOS.***

##### A. STRENGTHENING ANCHOR INSTITUTIONS

Through an integrated program of advanced level training and technical assistance, complemented by grants, Cro-NGO will build the capacity of organizations whose

leadership is important to the continued development of Croatia's NGO sector. Cro-NGO will help these organizations increase their prospects for long-term organizational and financial viability as a means of ensuring that essential capacity is not lost as foreign donor funding declines over the longer term.

Two distinct groups of organizations will be targeted. The first target group consists of intermediate support organizations that provide vital services to the rest of the sector, including, but not limited to, NGO resource centers and training organizations. The second group consists of the leading organizations in certain sub-sectors, including human rights, environmental protection, women's rights and economic needs, social service delivery, economic development, and citizen participation. These organizations serve as models and resources for other groups working in similar fields, while also helping to shape the public image of the sector as a whole. These organizations require targeted assistance in order to strengthen their organizational capacity and ensure their future sustainability.

**Applicants should outline a competitive process (including evaluation criteria) for selecting "anchor" organizations to participate in Cro-NGO. Promptly after the award of this Cooperative Agreement, USAID and the Recipient will agree on the selection process and criteria. USAID anticipates that between 10 and 15 organizations shall be selected to participate in this component of the program; final subawards will be subject to the prior written approval of USAID/Croatia.**

*Training and Technical Assistance:* The Recipient will provide targeted, advanced level training and technical assistance to enhance the sustainability of the two groups of anchor institutions described above. Workshop-style training programs should be complemented by "hands on" technical assistance and consulting in order to ensure that participant NGOs practically apply new concepts and tools learned during training programs. It is expected that training and technical assistance initiatives will occur as early as possible in the program to increase the "anchor" organizations' prospects for sustainability.

As many candidates for component of the Cro-NGO Program are already fairly sophisticated, the Recipient should expect to provide the majority of training and technical assistance at the intermediate to advanced level, and should tailor its training and technical assistance programs to the varying needs and interests of individual organizations. Possible topics of assistance include board development, constituency building, funding diversification (including ways to encourage philanthropic support from the Croatian corporate sector), strategic planning, advanced communications/public relations skills, management systems, volunteer and membership development, and financial management. Training and technical assistance needs should be identified during the initial competitive process, when possible; however, a brief assessment of each anchor organization should be conducted promptly after it has been selected for participation.

Applicants should propose a plan to build media relations capacity among anchor institutions. Potential activities include training NGO professionals on media relations skills, training for journalists on the role of NGOs in society, or organizing competitions

among journalists for coverage of NGO activities. Activities under this component of the program should be implemented in close coordination with Pro-Media II, USAID/Croatia's media assistance program.

*Sustainability Grants:* NGOs participating in the training and technical assistance program described above will also be eligible to apply for grant funding to reinforce the training and technical assistance provided and to enhance their organizational sustainability. Depending on the needs of grant applicants, grant funds can be used to cover on-going organizational expenses (e.g., salaries, rent, equipment), targeted organizational development initiatives (e.g., to develop a strategic, fundraising, or marketing plan or to participate in additional training activities), and/or project-based expenses. USAID expects that no less than 33 percent of the USAID funds for this program component will be used for subgrants.

#### *b. Increasing Local Sources of Support for NGOs*

In addition to strengthening anchor institutions to serve as key resources for NGOs, the "Cro-NGO" Program will increase the amount and number of sources of local support available to Croatia's NGO sector. Activities under this component of the program will complement efforts that promote the financial viability of the anchor institutions described above, as well as the small grants described in the next section.

Activities under this subcomponent fall into three categories: (1) laying the foundation for increased local government support of NGOs; (2) promoting philanthropic practices among corporations and individuals; and (3) promoting voluntarism. Activities aimed at increasing local government support of NGOs might include those aimed at increasing understanding and communication between the two sectors, working with local governments to develop competitive and transparent mechanisms to support NGOs, and building awareness within the NGO sector of local government requirements. Such efforts should be closely coordinated with the Urban Institute, USAID/Croatia's local government contractor, and the Government of Croatia's Office for NGO Cooperation, which has taken a leading role in promoting government-NGO partnerships. Activities to promote philanthropy among individuals and corporations might include educating potential donors on the benefits of supporting civil society and organizing awards ceremonies for philanthropists.

## ***2. Promoting Community Improvement Initiatives***

This program component consists of two sub-components: a small grants program for grassroots NGOs and additional organizational training, skills transfer, and information sharing to complement the small grants.

#### *a. The Small Grants Program*

The Recipient will conduct a small grants program to provide local NGOs with funding to implement projects and deliver services that meet demonstrated community needs, including the needs of women, multi-ethnic communities, and vulnerable groups. The

small grants program will target projects aimed at the community, not at the national or regional levels.

Types of projects eligible for support may include:

- initiatives that benefit youth, the elderly, or the disabled;
- innovative, low-cost delivery of social services, including health services;
- environmental or neighborhood clean-up efforts;
- creation or revitalization of public spaces and community centers; and
- targeted, community-based projects to address economic needs, such as unemployment.

This list is illustrative, not prescriptive. Applicants should propose a small grants program that provides broad thematic and geographic balance, and that draws on technical expertise that is already present within Croatia. Applicants should pay special attention to communities outside of Zagreb and outside other areas that have already received significant international donor funding. Promptly after the award of this agreement, the Recipient will finalize the program's thematic and geographic approach in consultation with USAID. USAID may ask the Recipient to designate one or more small grants rounds to meet the needs of specific communities or vulnerable groups.

Subgrant recipients will be expected to demonstrate community support for proposed projects through the provision of matching contributions from within their communities. Despite the difficult economic situation in much of Croatia, USAID believes that there are local resources available that can be tapped in support of such projects, and that tapping such support is essential to the development of Croatia's nonprofit sector. Community matching contributions can be provided in the form of volunteer time, financial donations, or in-kind support from local government (such as provision of free office or meeting space), businesses, or community members. The Recipient will be responsible for determining appropriate levels of matching or in-kind support and for developing appropriate procedures to verify community contributions.

USAID expects no less than sixty percent of the USAID funds provided under this program component to be used for small grants. Individual small grants shall not exceed \$25,000, although average grant size is expected to be significantly less than that amount. At least 75 subgrants for community projects shall be awarded under this program. (Additional subgrants for supplemental training are described below.) The duration of grants will depend upon the nature of the project, but may be up to one year. The initial round of grants should be awarded within three months of mobilization, with subsequent grant rounds held approximately on a quarterly basis. All subgrants for community projects will be awarded during the first two years of the program. Applicants are encouraged to propose mechanisms to make repeat funding available to well-performing grantees.

*Outreach, Proposal Preparation, and Selection:* Subgrants must be awarded through competitive selection. Applicants may propose an approach that combines revolving or “open door” grantmaking with issuance of targeted solicitations (RFAs). Proposed approaches should provide for maximum flexibility as well as balanced thematic and geographic coverage. In order to achieve this balance and to increase competitiveness, Applicants may choose to focus grant rounds on specific geographic areas or types of projects. USAID will approve all RFAs, as well as all criteria for revolving grantmaking, but will NOT approve the resultant small grants under this program component.

Many grassroots NGOs that might receive subgrants do not have sufficient experience in developing competitive proposals or implementing successful projects for international donors. This is especially true in rural and war-affected areas. Therefore, in addition to ensuring that RFAs and revolving grantmaking programs are widely announced and publicized, Applicants should propose a range of activities to enhance the submission of quality proposals by local NGOs, including broad-based training in targeted areas on proposal writing and program development.

Applicants should develop transparent and representative grant selection procedures and criteria to ensure that grant-making mirrors genuine community needs. Grant-making procedures should be as simple as possible, thereby promoting broad participation, while still ensuring the appropriate and effective use of USAID funds. Applicants are encouraged to submit sample RFA(s) with their applications.

Applicants may propose an approach that includes some grantmaking for community projects proposed by initiative groups or local community organizations that are not registered NGOs. In this case, Applicants should explicitly address both the accountability and the sustainability of these grants, and, when possible and appropriate, might assist these organizations in becoming registered NGOs.

Applicants must propose an approach and implementation plan that fulfills the following responsibilities:

- Designing competitive grant selection procedures
- Ensuring transparency of the grant program
- Developing guidance for preparing proposals
- Developing criteria for reviewing proposals
- Developing and issuing RFAs
- Reviewing and selecting proposals for funding
- Awarding subgrants to indigenous NGOs or other community groups in accordance with USAID guidance and policies
- Monitoring both the financial and programmatic aspects of grants
- Securing accountability and regular reporting from grantees

- Evaluating grantee activities and reporting to USAID/Croatia on a regular basis
- Ensuring that all grants are in compliance with any audit requirements and reporting to that effect to USAID; and
- Publicizing subgrantees' achievements and successes.

*b. Supplemental Organizational Training, Skills Transfer, and Information Sharing*

*Supplemental Organizational Training:* While at least sixty percent of the funds under this program component will be reserved for grants for community improvement projects, Applicants should set aside a portion of these funds to address subgrantees' training and technical assistance needs as they are identified during project implementation. Although subgrantees should be encouraged to identify their own organizational weaknesses, Applicants should outline how they will assist grantees in identifying appropriate training opportunities and/or other resources to address these needs. This could include participation in existing training programs, the acquisition of personalized training developed to meet the specific needs of individual subgrantees, or the development of an "internship" program for grassroots activists. **Applicants should propose training and technical assistance mechanisms that use existing Croatian resources to the maximum extent possible. Use of market-based mechanisms, such as voucher systems, is strongly encouraged.**

*Skills Transfer:* Local NGOs may wish to undertake community improvement projects, but may lack the technical skills to carry them out. Since funding for this agreement is not sufficient to enable the transfer of foreign technologies or expertise in technical areas, Applicants should plan at least one RFA to support partnership projects implemented jointly by at least two Croatian NGOs, with the local NGO as the lead partner. For example, recent successful grants programs have supported the transfer of skills in volunteer management and community organizing among Croatian NGOs.

*Information Sharing:* USAID's experience indicates that there is insufficient communication and information sharing among NGOs in Croatia. Although subgrants to promote coalition formation are not envisioned under this program, Applicants should propose supplemental activities that encourage and facilitate collaboration and communication among subgrantees, such as events that bring subgrantees together on either a geographic or substantive basis for training and information-sharing.

## V. GENDER CONSIDERATIONS

Because of both economic and equity issues, gender affects program performance and its inclusion in activity planning will result in better targeted and more effective programs. Gender is not a euphemism for "women". It means examining the constraints and opportunities for both men and women – particularly as they may differ. Including gender means assessing: how the problems of men and women may be different; how the impact of activities may differently affect men and women and how the contributions of men and women may contribute to results in different ways. The successful applicant will demonstrate a knowledge of and sensitivity to gender issues and illustrate how that



knowledge and sensitivity will be transmitted to subgrantees. As appropriate and feasible, all impact and indicator data will be disaggregated by gender.

## VI. LEVEL OF EFFORT

“Support for Croatia’s NGOs” is a three-year activity with two optional one-year extensions. The activity is expected to commence in September 2001. USAID expects to provide up to \$6 million, subject to the availability of funds, for the initial three years of this program, which should conclude in August 2004. Applicants are only expected to propose for the initial three years of the program.

## VII. EXPECTED RESULTS

In implementing this Program Description, the Recipient will seek to:

- *ENHANCE THE SUSTAINABILITY OF CROATIA’S NGO SECTOR BY PROVIDING TRAINING, TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE, AND SUSTAINABILITY GRANTS TO NGOS WHOSE LEADERSHIP IS CONSIDERED IMPORTANT TO THE LONG-TERM FUTURE OF CROATIA’S NGO SECTOR. THE RECIPIENT WILL ALSO SEEK TO INCREASE LOCAL SOURCES OF SUPPORT FOR NGOS AND TO IMPROVE THE IMAGE OF THE NONGOVERNMENTAL SECTOR IN CROATIA; AND*
- Promote community-based civil society initiatives through an integrated program of small grants and training.

The work performed under this agreement will contribute to achieving the following Strategic Objective (SO) and Intermediate Results (IRs):

More Effective Citizen Participation and Improved Governance (SO 2.1); More Effective Citizen Participation in Political And Economic Decision-Making (IR 2.1.1); Improved Enabling Environment for Effective CSOs (IR 2.1.1.1); Improved CSO Organizational and Financial Capacity (IR 2.1.1.2); and More Effective CSO Community-Based Initiatives (IR 2.1.1.3).

Here is an illustrative list of expected results under the “Cro-NGO” Program. The Recipient is expected to provide performance indicators to track and measure the program’s impact within six months of signing the agreement (see Section X, below).

For Component One:

- All assisted NGOs improve their operational capacity to execute stated objectives, as indicated by clear mission statements consistent with their activities.

- All assisted NGOs develop personnel systems, including job descriptions, performance appraisal systems, recruitment and dismissal policies.
- Several assisted NGOs devolve decision-making authority from the head of the organization to appropriate management levels.
- All assisted NGOs have operational business, strategic and fund-raising plans in place. Several assisted NGOs adopt well-defined governance structures to provide targeted leadership and continuity in these areas.
- All assisted NGOs improve their financial management capacity, implement clear and complete financial control systems and follow standard financial management procedures.
- Several assisted NGOs receive increased funding from local sources and diversify their funding base so as to have at least three sources of funding.
- Several assisted NGOs improve the quality of their services and increase outreach in one of the following areas: training and technical assistance, counseling, legal assistance, social services, education, or other. Several assisted NGOs initiate social contracting with local governments or other organizations.
- Several assisted NGOs establish and promote intra-sectoral cooperation among corporate, public and NGO sector actors, leading to the development of indigenous philanthropy in Croatia.
- Several assisted NGOs engage outside consultants to evaluate their organizational capacity and recommend improvements.
- All assisted NGOs improved their media communications skills.
- Several assisted NGOs promote voluntarism and provide training and technical assistance to organizations interested in receiving volunteers or to individuals interested in volunteering. Percentage of volunteers working with NGOs increases.
- All assisted NGO support centers provide technical assistance and operate as NGO resource centers, providing NGO incubator, library, volunteer center and legal center services to NGOs in their target areas.

For Component Two:

- Increased organizational capacity of community based organizations. (For example, a community organization expands its client base, or introduces or improves provision of a social service).

- Strengthened leadership in communities where assisted NGOs or other informal groups operate.
- Increased number of community based projects/initiatives and community involvement and support for NGO initiatives.
- Improved partnership with local authorities and businesses in assisted communities, as demonstrated by an increase in funding or other support for local initiatives or a change in policy at the local level.
- Improved quality of life of target groups in assisted communities (for example, women, children, youth, the elderly, mixed communities, unemployed persons, and others).

### ***VIII. COOPERATION WITH OTHER ASSISTANCE PROVIDERS AND PROGRAMS***

Effective implementation of the “Support for Croatia’s NGOs” program will require cooperation and coordination with several USG-funded and other-donor programs. Relevant USAID-supported programs include the following:

- NGO Legal Reform Initiative implemented by the International Center for Not-for-Profit Law (ICNL)
- ProMedia program implemented by the International Research and Exchange Board (IREX), which promotes the development of independent media
- Local Government Reform Program implemented by the Urban Institute
- Women’s Leadership Program for Democratic Social Change in Southeastern Europe, implemented by STAR/World Learning, which promote women’s economic and political empowerment and networking throughout the countries of the former Yugoslavia
- Economic and Community Revitalization Activity, which addresses the needs of war-affected communities to facilitate the return and reintegration of refugees
- Other programs to mitigate the effects of social transition currently in development.

As noted above, many donors besides USAID make significant contributions to civil society development in Croatia. They include other government-sponsored foundations and programs: the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE); UNDP; several European Commission programs, and the bilateral programs of the British, Canadian, Netherlands, and Swedish Embassies. Some private foundations, including the C.S. Mott Foundation, the Open Society Institute (Soros Foundation), and the German Stiftungen actively support Croatian civil society.

Coordination among these major donors working in Croatia remains a high priority for all involved in order to avoid duplication of effort, maximize opportunities, and to promote collaboration in funding specific projects. A bimonthly Civil Society Donors' Forum now meets regularly and includes the GOC Office for Government-NGO Cooperation as well as international donors working in all thematic areas. It is imperative that the Recipient implementing this project be aware of other assistance efforts share information with other USG- and foreign donor-funded programs that promote the growth of civil society and strengthen links between local government and civil society in Croatia. (More detailed descriptions of US- and other-donor-funded programs appears at Attachment 2.)

## ***IX. PERSONNEL AND RESPONSIBILITIES***

The Recipient will organize and manage its staff, subgrantees, and consultants to achieve maximum project impact within the budget resources provided and to maximize the use of Croatian expertise. It is envisioned that long-term staff consisting primarily of Croatian nationals will coordinate and supervise implementation of activities under this project. These activities are extremely complex: Component One "sustainability grants" will total up to \$100,000 over two years, while Component Two subgrants under are expected to range from \$1,000 to \$25,000; project sites extend across Croatia and will include war-affected and rural areas as well as urban centers. Therefore, it is essential that the Recipient engage sufficient staff to administer the project, travel to regional sites to conduct monitoring and participate in project events, and complete project and financial reporting in a timely way. Reporting must conform to the guidelines in Section X, below.

While the project will engage outside consultants from time to time to conduct special monitoring visits or assessments, write occasional analytical reports, or provide technical consultations, the Recipient must engage enough staff with the requisite qualifications to support the program's demanding administrative, monitoring, and reporting requirements. The technical application must clearly describe the delineation of duties among the permanent staff positions, and indicate where additional consultants and short-term personnel will be engaged.

As mentioned above, staff will also engage Croatian or, when necessary, foreign specialists to provide analysis and technical assistance for program activities as needed and as funding allows. For such engagements, the Recipient will ensure that scopes of work and expertise are appropriate to the individual needs of the activity, that the services or products provided meet the needs of the program, and that the program's resources are used in the most cost-effective manner.

Key personnel are those considered to be essential to the work being performed under this Cooperative Agreement, including any resident expatriate personnel. Incumbents for key positions are to be proposed by the Recipient. However, key personnel are subject to approval by USAID prior to their employment under the Cooperative Agreement.

The roster of key personnel may be amended from time to time during the course of this Cooperative Agreement to add, delete, or substitute personnel, as appropriate. However, all Recipient-recommended changes in key personnel (including proposed substitutes) must be submitted for review to the Agreement Officer and the USAID Cognizant Technical Officer (CTO) at least 30 days in advance of the recommended amendment, together with written justification in sufficient detail to permit evaluation of the impact on this activity. Failure to provide key personnel offered by the Recipient at the time of signing of the Cooperative Agreement will be grounds for immediate termination of the Cooperative Agreement.

The key personnel positions proposed by USAID for this Cooperative Agreement are the Zagreb Office Director, the Deputy Director, the Grants Manager for Anchor Organizations, and the Small Grants Manager. Suggested position descriptions and qualification statements are described below. Applicants may propose other staffing arrangements.

Chief of Party:

*Qualifications*

- Expatriate
- Masters Degree in social sciences, international relations, business management or other relevant field
- Relevant professional experience managing and implementing large multi-year USAID-funded projects in the area of civil society and NGO development
- Relevant professional experience in Central and Eastern European (CEE) or other transitional countries
- Demonstrated understanding of the NGO sector in CEE transitional countries
- Demonstrated ability to manage several activities dealing with NGO development and community development projects simultaneously;
- Demonstrated ability to effectively manage large staff, including expatriate and local employees
- Strong interpersonal skills; ability to interact effectively with Croatian government representatives on a national and local level, NGO representatives, and corporate sector leaders, as well as in-country and foreign experts
- Past experience working with international donors on development programs, particularly civil society programs
- English language fluency required; Croatian language working knowledge desirable
- Familiarity with USAID regulations and procedures

Deputy Chief of Party

*Qualifications*

- Expatriate or Croatian national
- Masters degree in social sciences, international relations, business management or other relevant field preferred
- Relevant professional experience managing and implementing large multi-year donor-funded projects in the area of civil society and NGO development
- Relevant experience managing NGO development projects, including bigger and smaller subgrants and training programs in Croatia or other Central and Eastern European countries, and thorough understanding of Croatian NGO sector
- Demonstrated ability to effectively manage large staff of local employees
- Strong interpersonal skills sufficient to maintain good relations with NGO partners, local and national government representatives, corporate sector and foreign donors
- English and Croatian language fluency required
- Familiarity with USAID regulations and procedures

## Grants Manager for Anchor Organizations

### *Qualifications*

- BA in social sciences or other relevant field
- Croatian national
- Relevant professional experience managing NGO subgrants program in Croatia;
- Good knowledge and understanding of NGO sector development issues, including the role of intermediary support organizations in the development of the NGO sector
- Excellent interpersonal skills; demonstrated ability to work in team
- Familiarity with USAID regulations and procedures desirable

## Small Grants Program Manager

### *Qualifications*

- BA in social studies or related field
- Croatian national
- Relevant knowledge and experience managing small grants and community development projects and thorough understanding of Croatian NGO sector
- Excellent interpersonal skills, ability to work in team
- Familiarity with USAID regulations and procedures desirable

## **X. Reporting Requirements**

The Recipient will provide the following reports to the USAID Cognizant Technical Officer (CTO) and the Agreement Officer as specified. In all cases, the required report(s) will be delivered to the CTO for distribution within USAID.

### **Work Plan:**

Within forty-five days (45) days of award of the Cooperative Agreement, the Recipient will develop and submit a draft annual workplan describing the Recipient's approach to 1) the overall design of the programs; 2) conducting initial assessments, if any are required; 3) competitive selection of anchor organizations; and 4) launching the small grants program. Six months after signing the Agreement, a team consisting of representatives from the Recipient's team and representatives of USAID will meet in Zagreb to reach agreement on a monitoring and tracking system that identifies baselines, benchmarks, and responsible techniques for measuring the project's progress and impact.

Workplans will be action oriented, delineated by calendar quarter, and linked to Program goals and objectives. They will include:

- A description of the type and magnitude of activities planned by the Recipient during the year, the staff and type of consultants to be involved, the level of effort for each, and where and when the activities will be conducted. This description should include

activities planned by the Recipient to strengthen the “anchor” organizations, such as training in governance, fundraising or strategic planning. It should also include a description of small grants program grantmaking and other activities. Any plans to engage Croatian or foreign consultants should be noted in this description.

- A budget for the year which corresponds to the workplan.
- Plans for publications, reports, and other information dissemination and training activities, by calendar quarter.
- Milestones and scheduled completion dates for program activities, including a schedule for small grants competitions, for major training events, and for the production of the reports or publications indicated below.
- A reporting system compatible with USAID/Croatia’s Performance Monitoring Plan (PMP) and Strategic Framework that gives results in measurable terms.
- For the second and subsequent years, workplans will include lessons learned in the previous workplan period and what program adjustments will be made to reflect these lessons learned.

Each subsequent year, the Recipient will prepare an annual workplan. Annual workplans will describe objectives, time-phased activities, staff level of effort, and will include a proposed budget using the line items in the Cooperative Agreement. The Recipient will submit a draft copy to the USAID CTO for review at least sixty days before the end of the previous workplan period. These workplans will use the format of the first annual workplan and additionally include a review of the previous workplan, the activities that resulted, the results achieved and problems that existed and how they were resolved. The CTO must approve the annual workplans.

#### **Quarterly Reports:**

The Recipient will submit two copies of a progress report (10 pages maximum, single spaced, plus attachments) on a quarterly basis to the USAID CTO. The quarterly progress reports will include a description of results to date compared to planned tasks, discussion of key issues, problems and findings based on work to date; several illustrative success stories; and an identification of each task undertaken and its status. These reports will cover activities conducted (including locations) and individuals involved (including the level of effort for each individual). Reports will be submitted within 30 days from the last day of each reporting period. Three copies of this report will be submitted to the USAID CTO.

#### **Quarterly Financial Reports**

The Recipient will comply with financial reporting requirements in effect and specified in this cooperative agreement. In addition, the Recipient will submit to USAID, through the



CTO, a quarterly financial report that specifically includes line item budgets, advances under major sub-agreements, expenditures and accruals (or encumbrances) and a pipeline (balance remaining). A table with estimated expenditures and accruals will be submitted to the CTO no less than fifteen days before the end of each fiscal year quarter.

### **Small Grants Lists**

In addition to the quarterly progress and financial reports specified above, the Recipient will provide the USAID CTO with lists of small grants awarded under this agreement on a quarterly basis. These lists should contain: the name and contact information for the awardee, the title and duration of the project, the amount of the award, and a brief description of the project.

### **Publications**

The Recipient will provide a clipping file with journal, magazine, and newspaper articles, newsletter inserts and other publications arising from this Cooperative Agreement to the USAID CTO when each Quarterly Progress Report is submitted. Publications resulting from small grants awarded under this Agreement should be submitted to project and resource center staff in electronic version so that they may be made available on the Internet. Each publication produced under this Agreement will identify and acknowledge USAID's contribution to the publication.

### **Annual Reports:**

In addition to quarterly reports, the Recipient will submit annual reports (20 pages maximum, single-spaced) describing programmatic areas, and progress and constraints in these areas, to the USAID CTO. Annual reports will be submitted within 30 days from the end of each calendar year. These reports will be made available for wide public dissemination.

### **Final Report:**

A draft final report is due to USAID 60 days before the end of the Cooperative Agreement. USAID will review and comment within 30 days of receipt. The final report for the entire Cooperative Agreement period will be delivered to the USAID CTO within 15 days after the estimated completion date of the Cooperative Agreement and will:

- Contain an overall description of the activities under the Program during the period of this Cooperative Agreement, and the significance of these activities;
- Present life-of-project results towards achieving performance indicators, as well as an analysis of how the indicators illustrate the project's impact on the development of the NGO sector in Croatia, and summarize the program's accomplishments related to the development of the Croatian NGO sector, as well as any unmet targets and the reasons for them;

- Describe the methods of work used and the pros and cons of these methods;
- Provide comments and recommendations regarding unfinished work and/or future needs and directions for community development and strengthening grassroots initiatives; and
- Contain a fiscal report that describes in detail how the grant funds were used.

### **Trip Reports :**

Trip reports will be provided for international travel funded under this Agreement. This includes trip reports summarizing participation in professional workshops and meetings related to the project, or international consultancies performed within Croatia. Trip reports will include a description of the purpose of the trip, participants, and key activities completed. Contents of the report include: an executive summary, stated purpose or objectives of the visit, the outcome of the visit, action taken and recommendations for future action. The Recipient will, within 10 days after completion of each trip, submit two copies of each trip report to the CTO.

### **Presentation of Results**

At the conclusion of the “Support for Croatian NGOs” program, the Recipient will give a formal presentation to USAID describing the accomplishments of the project as well as problems encountered during the course of specific activities, and suggested directions for future programming.

### **SECTION III**

#### **Evaluation Criteria**

To make an objective evaluation possible, applications must clearly demonstrate how the organization meets the following criteria.

##### **A. MANDATORY QUALIFICATION CRITERION**

Applications must satisfy this criterion to be eligible for further consideration.

- 1. The applicant must be an U.S. Non-Government Organization (NGO) or Private Voluntary Organization (PVO)**

##### **B. WEIGHTED CRITERIA**

The weighted criteria for evaluating applications are provided below.

##### **I. Approach and Implementation Plan: 30 points**

- A. Extent to which the proposed approach is consistent with and supportive of the project aims outlined in this Request for Applications; Extent to which the application presents a clear and specific description of the activities, outcomes and results anticipated.
- B. Efficacy of the overall mix of training, technical assistance and subgrants to achieve program objectives.
- C. Evidence of participation by indigenous organizations and professionals. In particular, plan for use of local trainers and other in-country resources to implement the program. Additionally, the extent to which the plan will increase the knowledge, skills, and capacity of existing Croatian training resources through advanced training, mentoring and supervision.
- D. The creativity, reasonableness, and flexibility of the implementation plan, as well as the date by which the Applicant might reasonably begin to implement it. Points will be given for prompt mobilization of the assistance team.
- E. Monitoring and Evaluation Plan: Identification of expected intermediate and final results of the program. Proposed monitoring and evaluation plan, including a plan for collecting base-line data and suggested indicators of program impact and success.
- F. Applicants must describe how the proposed program will collaborate with other USAID and foreign donor assistance programs active in Croatia to maximize the impact of activities and avoid duplication of efforts. The implementation plan should be directed towards meeting all program requirements with USAID funding.

## **II. Key Personnel, Organizational Capability, and Past Performance: 30 points**

- A. Extent and nature of relevant professional experience of key personnel:
  - 1. Chief of Party's experience in managing complex international development civil society programs in transitional countries; his/her experience in building and effectively supervising a diverse team of employees.
  - 2. Quality and demonstrated experience of other proposed field personnel.
- B. Proposed management plan, including staffing plan and nature of proposed home office support.
- C. Description of relevant past performance and existing capabilities of the Applicant in civil society/democracy-building activities in CEE and other transitional countries; demonstrated ability to mobilize appropriate technical expertise in-country and internationally.

## **III. Specific Criteria for Component 1, *Enhancing the Sustainability of Croatia's NGO Sector*: 20 points**

- A. Applicant's definition of "sustainability"; Applicant's proposed plan to promote the existence of a sustainable NGO sector, including strong NGO intermediate service organizations. Applicants should describe the role intermediate service and other "anchor" organizations might play in promoting the growth and development of Croatia's NGO sector.
- B. Proposed selection criteria and procedures for selecting ISOs and other "anchor" organizations for participation in this program
- C. Proposed strategic approach for using subgrants to reinforce training and technical assistance provided to "anchor" organizations; percentage of budget proposed for anchor grants. Quality of proposed activities to ensure that outcomes of the advanced-level training provided to "anchor" organizations are made widely available to other Croatian NGOs.
- D. Proposed plan to assist and improve cooperation between NGOs and media and plan for improving the public image of NGOs.
- E. Applicant's demonstrated ability to responsibly conduct and manage a large subgrants program; Applicant's demonstrated ability to provide transferable organizational support and effective technical assistance to larger NGOs or ISOs.

## **IV. Specific Criteria for Component 2, *Community Improvement Initiatives*: 20 points**

- A. Applicant's strategy to manage effectively a large number of small community improvement grants; percentage of budget proposed for community improvement grants.
- B. Extent to which the Applicant's approach will achieve thematic and geographic balance in grantmaking; Extent to which the approach describes appropriate, transparent, and representative procedures for competitive award of small grants.
- C. Proposed selection criteria and procedures for selecting small grants.
- D. Applicant's approach to ensuring the submission of a sufficient number of fundable proposals; proposed approach to enhancing the success of funded projects; efficacy of specific measures to encourage broader community support for proposed projects (for example, requiring local matching contributions).
- E. What creative, cost-effective methods can be used to publicize the achievements of small grant recipients in order to improve the public image of the NGO sector?